

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 002298

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR PRM/ANE, EUR/SE, EUR/PRA AND NEA/NGA
DEPT PASS USAID FOR BHA/OFDA - WGARVELINK AND FFP
EUCOM FOR JE, JR, J5, SOJ7 AND POLAD
GENEVA FOR RMA
CENTCOM FOR J3, J5 AND POLAD
KUWAIT FOR MDRO AND HOC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/08/2008

TAGS: [EAID](#) [IZ](#) [MOPS](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TFI201: GOT AND TURKISH RED CRESCENT ATTEMPTING TO
COORDINATE PLANNED AID FOR IRAQ WITH THE ICRC

REF: ANKARA 2191

1. (C) Summary: MFA organized a meeting of Turkish Red Crescent (TRC), International Committee of the Red Cross and U.S. Embassy representatives to present and discuss a TRC proposal to send humanitarian supplies to Iraq and provide medical treatment in Turkey for injured Iraqis. The proposal contemplates one convoy for northern Iraq and one for the south. ICRC responded that TRC and its counterparts in front-line states must coordinate their assistance through ICRC. End Summary.

2. (SBU) MFA Deputy Director General for International Political Organizations Tunc Ugdul hosted a joint MFA - Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) - International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) - U.S. Embassy meeting on April 8 to discuss Turkey's plan, through its Red Crescent Society, to deliver humanitarian relief to Iraq. TRC President Ertan Gonen, ICRC Regional Representative Finn Ruda, Econ Counselor and Mission Disaster Relief Officer attended the meeting.

3. (C) Gonen stated that Turkey would like to send humanitarian supplies to both northern and southern Iraq and to offer medical treatment for war wounded in Turkish hospitals in Silopi, Diyarbakir and Ankara. TRC contemplates one six-truck convoy for Basra (via Syria or Jordan) to deliver water and medicine, and another six-truck convey for the north (probably Erbil) to ship medicines and food. TRC, working with the Anatolia Foundation NGO and Americare, would provide supplies and transport. The municipality of Izmit, which received Iraqi aid following the 1999 Marmara earthquakes, is prepared to donate bottled water. Gonen explained that, following donations from NATO allies and NGOs and given the lack of a refugee crisis on the Turkish frontier, Turkey has some surplus items which are urgently needed in Iraq. Gonen said TRC staff were available to travel to Iraq to perform needs assessments. He asked that the USG provide security for convoys.

4. (C) Gonen and Ugdul stated that TRC wished to coordinate its efforts with the ICRC and emphasized that the GOT had no intention of making a unilateral aid delivery. Ugdul stated that Turkey felt the need to reciprocate for Iraq's help following Turkey's earthquakes, and raised Turkey's interest in the well-being of Iraq's Turcoman minority (while emphasizing that Turkish aid would be made available to all in need regardless of ethnic origin). Feza Ozturk, MFA Department Head for International Political Organizations, added that the Turkish authorities and TRC are under considerable political pressure to demonstrate to the public that they are responding to humanitarian needs in Iraq.

5. (C) Ozturk pointed out that in the center and south, families had received advance rations of food through July, but that in the north, most families had received the equivalent of only a few weeks advance rations. The World Food Program has requested MFA permission to ship food items, most recently for a shipment of 56,000 tons of commodities to be purchased in Turkey as well as imported from abroad, to northern Iraq for this reason. Ozturk suggested that there is an inconsistency in the way Turkish Red Crescent and the NGOs are perceived outside Turkey in that TRC is required to coordinate its activities abroad with ICRC, while NGOs appear to be entitled to operate freely in Iraq.

6. (SBU) Ruda responded that ICRC had to be careful to preserve neutrality and independence in order to be able to deliver emergency aid wherever it is needed in Iraq. Noting recent incidents involving the Kuwaiti and United Arab Emirates' Societies, Ruda emphasized the security risks for

societies operating independently of the ICRC, and stressed that ICRC would not sanction or assist with security for national societies which act unilaterally. Noting that national societies and the ICRC had met April 6 in Abu Dhabi on these issues, Ruda stated that ICRC is interested in integrating aid from societies in neighboring states as the security situation permits. He stated that the societies and ICRC agreed to establish an information link between the Iraqi and Syrian Red Crescent which would pass information on humanitarian needs to the other participants. National societies should route any assistance through ICRC hubs in Damascus and Kuwait. At the hubs, ICRC would coordinate with both the GOI and CENTCOM on the logistics of delivering the relief. Goods would have to be reloaded to ICRC trucks. In the future, the combatants may accept direct relief from national societies, but this is not now the case, said Ruda. Ruda stated that he would report Turkey's offer to ICRC headquarters, and that he had invited the ICRC's "Movement Coordinator" in Iraq to come to Turkey to discuss the Turkish proposal.

17. (SBU) Ruda stated that, while gaps in medical supplies were beginning to appear, the food situation was largely in hand. ICRC had still not used up its prepositioned stocks of medicines, including materials for 7,000 war wounded. He implied that the humanitarian situation was not so urgent as to obviate the requirement to properly coordinate relief from national societies through ICRC.

18. (SBU) Econ Counselor welcomed Turkey's offer to provide assistance, but agreed that relief shipments needed to be properly coordinated. He said he would report Turkey's offer to the Department and to CENTCOM, but cautioned that the U.S. military was not likely to be able to provide direct security for TRC convoys.

Comment and Action Request

19. (C) Embassy believes that Turkey's offer is largely motivated by domestic political considerations and the fact that a displaced persons emergency on or near Turkey's border has not materialized. The GOT and TRC have already begun to return staff which had been deployed to crisis centers in Diyarbakir back to Ankara. Embassy would appreciate Washington guidance, as requested reftel, as to whether and how the U.S. military will restrict and/or coordinate NGO access and/or activities in northern Iraq.

PEARSON